



# TO EXPLORE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF SCHOOL TEACHERS

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## ABSTRACT

Having a considerable impetus to conduct a research on occupational stress in educational setting, the present study was initiated through descriptive survey method. To collect the data "Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI)" was administered on a stratified random sample comprising of 363 male and 234 female teachers selected from 30 schools of West Bengal, India. TSI includes total 49 items – clustered in 10 factors. Each of these items is followed by a Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 to 5. To compute the total stress score sum of the mean item scores in each of the factors is taken, and then the sum is divided by 10; so, actually after normalization the score ranges from 1 to 5, with the midpoint at 3. The score at the higher end of the scale should be considered a potential problem. The result shows that the mean and standard deviation of TSI scores were 2.27 and 0.33 respectively. According to the manual, a score of 1.9 would place a respondent near the "mild strength rating", with his or her stressful events being barely noticeable. Here on an average the teachers did not experience much stress – but their stress was above the "mild strength rating"; so it was noticeable.

**KEY WORDS:** Occupational Stress, Mild Strength Rating, Barely Noticeable, Likert-Type Scale.

### 1. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

Now-a-days, teachers' wearing down is a serious issue. In order to implement effective educational programs, schools need experienced teachers who are equipped to deal with such challenges. In response to increased work demands, and the challenge of educating a diverse student population, many teachers are suffering from mental problems, citing stress as a primary reason for this. Stress factors most often include inadequate salaries, work overload, curriculum concerns, lack of shared decision making and unsatisfactory relationships with stakeholders.

In both qualitative and quantitative research, the stressors, producing stress among the teachers, have consistently been identified; these include – (a) student unrest, their disturbing behaviours, and their lack of motivation and lack of interest; (b) unsupportive administrators; and (c) overly prescriptive inspectors and supervisors who limit the autonomy of the teachers (Finlay-Jones, 1986; Ingersoll, 2001; Schonfeld, 2006; Shirom, Oliver, & Stein, 2009).

Considerable attention has been focused on stress research in educational setting (Hepburn & Brown, 2001; Nagel & Brown, 2003; Williams & Gersch, 2004).

Throughout the world, there is currently a great concern regarding the impact of prolonged stress on the health of teachers and consequently, the learning experiences of the students (Antonioni et al., 2000). Costs related to teachers' health issues are also a concern for educational stakeholders seeking to provide quality educational experiences with limited resources (Thomas et al., 2003).

#### 1.1 Significance of the Study:

The education system of a country in general and the school education system in particular are the devices to develop the human capital as economic assets for wealth generation of the country as well as also as social assets for improving the quality of the living of the members of the society.

Based on a review of national and international research, it may be concluded that teachers' occupational stress is a real phenomenon. High level stress is associated with a range of casual factors, such as (a) intrinsic to teaching, (b) individual vulnerability and (c) systematic influences.

If stress sustains for a long period of time the problem becomes important. The researchers of this study have made an attempt to explore the occupational stress among the school teachers of West Bengal, India.

#### 1.2 Broad Objective of the Study:

The broad objective of the study was to ascertain the state of affairs of Occupational Stress of the teachers.

#### 1.3 Specific Objectives:

The present study was designed to have the statistical descriptions of the Occupational Stress scores obtained by the teachers.

### 2. METHODS:

The present study was carried out through descriptive survey method. The details regarding the sample, research instruments, procedure of data collection and statistical technique are reported herewith.

#### 2.1 Sample:

A stratified random sample comprising of 363 male and 234 female teachers, selected from 30 Government / Government aided Secondary / Higher Secondary Schools of West Bengal, India, were participated in the study.

#### 2.2 Tool of Research:

For data collection following research tool was used in the present study. The tool was selected by applying yardsticks of relevance, appropriateness, reliability, validity and suitability. Brief descriptions of the tools are given hereunder.

##### 2.2.1 Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) (Fimian, 1988):

This inventory has been developed by Fimian (1988) to assess occupational stressors specific to teachers. This inventory includes total 49 items, clustered in 10 factors. Each item is followed by a Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (no strength; not noticeable) to 5 (major strength; extremely noticeable). To compute the total stress score, sum of the mean scores in each of the factors is taken, and then the sum is divided by 10 (total number of factors). Actually after normalization the score ranges from 1 to 5, with the midpoint at 3. The score at the higher end of the scale should be considered a potential problem.

It is reported in the manual of the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) that its score is near-normally distributed for the regular teachers (mean = 2.64; median = 2.59). Since these values fall just short of the 3.0 "medium strength" mark, a score of 3.5 would place the strength of stress midway between medium and great strength, with the stressful events being moderately to very noticeable. A score of 1.9 would place a respondent near the "mild strength rating", with his or her stressful events being barely noticeable.

#### 2.3 Procedure for Data Collection:

The headmasters of the selected schools were communicated for his/her permission to allow collecting the relevant data. The data on was collected by administering the above-mentioned tool on the subjects under study in accordance with the directions provided in the manual of the tool.

#### 2.4 Analysis of the Collected Data:

The results of the study was extracted by processing the data with the help of SPSS 20.0 software.

### 3. RESULTS:

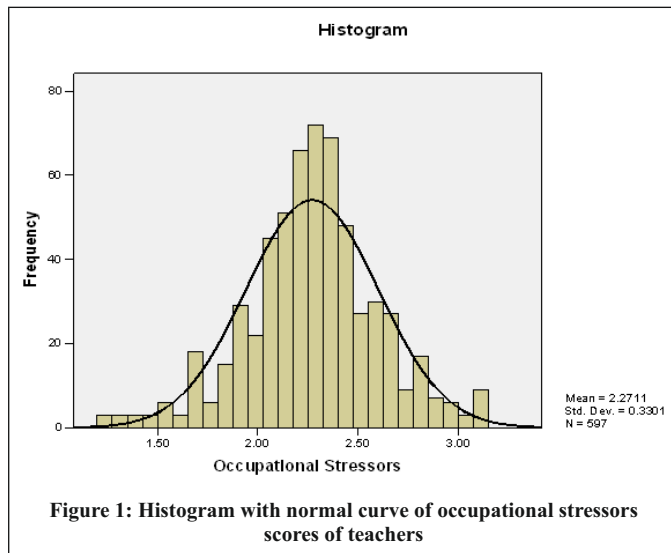
The results on occupational stress of teachers are presented hereunder.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Occupational Stress of Teachers**

| Teacher Stress         | N   | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|------------------------|-----|-------|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| Occupational Stressors | 597 | 1.91  | 1.23    | 3.14    | 2.27 | 0.33           |

Table-1 presents the descriptive statistics of occupational stressors of teachers. The “minimum” of the scores was 1.23 and the “maximum” of those was 3.14 and the range was 1.91; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 2.27 and 0.33 respectively.

Figure 1 depicts the histogram with normal curve of occupational stressors scores of teachers.



#### 4. DISCUSSION:

The descriptive statistics of “Teacher Stress Inventory” scores of teachers were presented in table-1. From the table we get the “mean” was 2.27. Clearly the mean score was below the “medium strength”, which reflected that the on an average the teachers did not experience much stress. But the mean was above the “mild strength rating” (i.e. 1.9); so it was noticeable.

#### 5. CONCLUSION:

On an average the teachers did not experience much stress. But their stress was above the “mild strength rating”; so it was noticeable.

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